

Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished members of the Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to be the President's nominee for Assistant Secretary of Defense for Critical Technologies. I am grateful for the opportunity to potentially continue to serve my country. But I am also humbled by the awesome challenges and opportunities we face as a nation.

Chairman Wicker, you have regularly stated that the United States faces the most dangerous security environment since World War II. Those of us who have committed our professional lives to national security know your words are not hyperbole. When people ask me whether it is really as bad as people say, I respond it is worse than you can imagine.

The People's Republic of China is performing, quite frankly, the unprecedented. While some talk about the PRC's theft of our intellectual property and "investing" adversarial capital into nontraditional companies with compelling technologies – which are both true – the PRC is also innovating, testing, producing, and operationalizing critical technologies at a pace and scale *never* seen before. They are simultaneously modernizing every prong of combat power – their naval forces, their air forces, their missile forces, their nuclear forces, and their missile defenses, to name just a few.

The PRC's military modernization and build up is being executed with speed purpose. We must be ready.

President Trump and Secretary Hegseth have made the Department's mission clear. We will achieve Peace through Strength. Deter major conflict by maintaining technological superiority. And if forced to fight –

to win decisively. We will restore the warrior ethos, rebuild our military, and reestablish deterrence.

The office to which I have been nominated is relatively new. It is charged, quite simply, to set “the technology vision for an era of competition.” If confirmed, the Department’s technology vision will be to dramatically accelerate technology transition.

I will work every relentlessly to ensure the critical technologies our warfighters need are in their hands as quickly as humanly possible. We will do this by focusing on three strategic priorities.

First, support defense acquisition reform to deliver state-of-the-art capabilities at speed, relevance, and scale. The President’s executive order to modernize defense acquisition and spur innovation are consistent with many of the defense acquisition reforms under consideration by this committee. I will coordinate within the Department, with the Military Services, and with this committee to cut red tape and preserve the technological supremacy of our warfighters. To do business at the speed of business.

Second, strengthen the Department’s adoption of critical technologies. In fields like artificial intelligence, microelectronics, quantum science, space-based systems, or hypersonics. We must close that gap. We will do it not by slowing down innovation, but by creating new innovation on-ramps and leveraging existing innovation on-ramps. We will identify operational problems to solve, and we will perform rapid prototyping and fielding. We must enable our warfighters to access the best technologies—not years from now, but when they need them most: today and tomorrow.

Finally, we will plan for transition at the outset of every technology project. Each project will be tied to a Military Service or program gap.

Our technology development and transition offices will operate with the understanding that the Military Services are our customers. We will serve the Military Services' priorities. We will support the warfighters by working with the warfighters.

The United States is at an inflection point. Our ability to shape the future depends on whether we can harness innovation faster and more effectively than our adversaries. We must act boldly, decisively, and wisely. We must take calculated risks, but must remain anchored in our values. If entrusted with your support, I will do my part. We must never lose sight of the fact that at the heart of our national defense are the service members who rely on us to equip them for the challenges ahead.

To close, I would not be here today without the support of my amazing wife Melanie (who is also a Navy veteran) my family, mentors, colleagues, and the dedicated professionals I've had the privilege of working alongside throughout my career. I'm especially grateful to those in the Department of Defense and the broader national security community who inspired my commitment to public service.

If confirmed, I will give this role my full devotion. Thank you again for your consideration. I welcome your questions and look forward to discussing how I can support the Department's mission and serve the American people.